ordered twice; and, by granting repeated extensions. Yes, the company was, perhaps, not a profitable company. But, when did it start making losses? It was making profits till 1999-2000 although, that was a small profit. It made loss, for the first time, in the year 2000-2001. The net loss was Rs. 1.56 crores. At that point of time, maybe the decision to disinvest was right. I am not second-guessing it. But, at that point of time, I don't think the situation was so desperate that one had to pursue a single-bid transaction, not invoke the bank guarantee, which was ordered twice, grant extensions on three occasions, and somehow close the transaction in an unusual meeting with the bankers, who would lend as much as Rs. 109 crores to finance the transction of Rs. 150 crores. Prudence would have dictated, " Does not matter. Let us invite another bid. Let us see whether other bidders come. Let us invoke the bank guarantee". And, if Mr. Ajit Kelkar comes forward and pays interest or pays a penalty, you can always count the amount invoked in the bank guarantee against the final bid. I personally think, I mean, it I appears to me in retrospect, that the then Government was driven by the zeal to disinvest. And, perhaps, as a result of that zeal, they overlooked some discomforting aspects of this transaction. I would respectfully conclude, Sir, on the question of resale.... The agreement does not permit the resale. There is no shareholders' agreement. There is only a sale agreement. The matter is, now, *sub judice* before the High Court of Bombay regarding the Voluntary Retirement Scheme. But, if there is a violation of agreement, I whould certainly advise the Ministry of Civil Aviation to take action. And, I would certainly play whatever role the Ministry of Finance has to play. Sir, I would only conclude by saying that, as at present advised, I would wait for the report of the CAG and take further steps in the matter based on the report of the CAG, especially to address some discomforting aspects which I have mentioned. Thank you, Sir.

PAPERS LAID ON THE TABLE

Notifications of the Ministry of Finance

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P.CHIDAMBARAM) : Sir, I lay on the Table a copy each (in English and Hindi) of the following Notifications of the Ministry of Finance (Department of Revenue), together with an Explanatory Memorandum on the Notifications:

1. Notification No. 82/2004-Customs, dated the 18th August, 2004, seeking to amend Notification No. 21/2002-Customs, dated the 1st March, 2002 so as to reduce effective rates of customs duty on petrol, diesel, kerosene (for PDS) and LPG with effect from the 18th August, 2004, under section 159 of the Customs Act, 1962.

2. Notification No. 44/2004-Central Excise, dated the 18th August, 2004, seeking to amend Notification No. 6/2002-Central Excise dated the 1st March, 2002, so as to reduce effective rate of excise duty on petrol, diesel and kerosene (for PDS) with effect from the 18th August, 2004, under sub-section (2) of section 38 of the Central Excise Act, 1944. [Placed in Library. For (1) and (2) *see* No.LT.724/04]

SHORT DURATION DISCUSSION

Due to changes made in School Textbooks by Central Government

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Now, we will take up the short duration discussion on the situation arising due to changes in the school textbooks by the Central Government. Dr. Murli Manohar Joshi will initiate the discussion.

डा. मुरली मनोहर जोशी (उत्तर प्रदेश) : उपसभापति जी, आपने एक बहुत ही महत्वपूर्ण विषय पर चर्चा कराने का निर्णय लिया है और इस पर चर्चा के लिए जो मुझे समय दिया है, उसके लिए मैं आपका आभारी हूँ। पिछले दो-तीन महीनों में सरकार के द्वारा जिस प्रकार से पाठ्य-पुस्तकों में मनमाने ढंग से फेर-बदल करके छात्रो, अध्यापकों और अभिभावकों को बड़ी भारी कठिनाई में डालने का काम शुरू किया है, उससे देश के सामने और विशेषकर के छात्रों के सामने, अध्यापकों के सामने बहुत बड़ी कठिनाइयां पैदा हुई हैं, बहुत से कन्फ्यूजन पैदा हुए हैं और इस बात को लेकर सारे देश में बहुत चिंता है।

उपसभापति महोदय, मेरे सामने सरकार का एक आदेश है, जो इन्होंने 12 जून को प्रसारित किया था। उस आदेश में इन्होने यह कहा है- "The issues of communalisation and inadequacies of history textbooks of the NCERT have engaged public and academic attention for a long time." मैं नहीं जानता कि कौनसी शिकायतें किन किताबों के बारे में सरकार के पास आई। जब ये किताबें छपी थीं और जब यह पाठ्यक्रम बनाया जा रहा था तो उसके बाद किसी ने भी, न तो किसी मुस्लिम संस्था ने, न किसी ईसाई संस्था ने, न किसी सिख संस्था ने, न किसी यहूदी संस्था ने और न किसी संप्रदाय या किसी भी धर्म को मानने वालों ने कोई शिकायत की थी कि इन पुस्तकों में सांप्रदायिक भेदभाव है या सांप्रदायिकता है। सरकार ने उस समय यह कहा था, उस समय मैं मंत्रालय में था, कि अगर कोई भी बात इन पाठ्य-पुस्तकों में आपत्तिजनक होगी, संविधान के खिलाफ होगी, हमारी सरकार की सेकुलरिज्म की मान्यताओं के खिलाफ होगी तो उसके बारे में हमें बताया जाए, हम उसे सुधारेंगे, लेकिन कोई भी शिकायत कहीं से भी नहीं आई। फिर भी सरकार ने एक राजनैतिक फैसला लिया।